

ICPSR Committee Meeting Minutes

June 2 and 4, 2009

Budget and Policy Committee

Council: Aletha C. Huston (Chair), Francine Berman, Michael R. Haines, Jeffrey Moon, Ann Wolpert

Staff: JD Alford, Rita Bantom, Myron Gutmann, Stacey Kubitz

I. Strategic Plan Update

ICPSR continues to concentrate its effort on staff communications. As stated in the briefing book, the Staff Feedback Network has rolled out, the first Climate Survey has concluded, a Supervisor Forum has been held, and the career path project for the Collection Development Unit has been finalized. Between now and the October meeting, ICPSR plans to identify a better way to build the annual budget to reflect the organization's strategic directions/goals for the coming year.

II. Financial and Administrative Issues

A. FY 2009 Year-End Financial Projection

Staff reported that ICPSR anticipates ending FY2009 with a deficit of approximately \$100K compared to the original budget of a deficit of \$170K. A change in University reporting of the quasi-endowment fund from book value to market value has had a negative impact on this year's bottom line.

Action Item: Council requested that a report/display be created that separates operational and non-operational activity for the FY2009 year-end and FY2010 budgets.

B. FY2010 Final Budget

ICPSR presented a budget with a deficit of \$412K, which is a slight improvement from the \$452K deficit presented at the March meeting. A key driver of this deficit continues to be the membership revenue ICPSR is holding back due to the economy. The budgeted membership revenue is roughly 10% (\$300K) less than the total current membership. ICPSR used historical data from prior recession periods to arrive at this total.

During FY 2010, ICPSR leadership will work to ensure that the budgeted deficit is not structural. This includes securing additional funding, moving approximately three FTE positions from membership-funded projects to sponsored projects, and reviewing all IDCR-funded positions with the goal of finding other funding for some of these positions.

The committee recommended that Council approve the proposed budget.

Action Item: Council asked for a committee report on core budget needs for those member dues-funded areas most consistent with the Strategic Plan.

C. Personnel

Myron Gutmann reported on his continuing efforts to recruit someone to lead ICPSR's community outreach activities.

Paperwork to appoint Timothy Bynum (Christopher Maxwell's successor) as Research Scientist and Director of the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data and Nancy McGovern as Research Assistant Professor has been submitted. Approval is expected soon.

III. Governance Issues

A. Council Election Planning

B. Prizes Committee

C. Plans for the June 2009 Council Meeting

There was no in-depth discussion of the governance issues during the committee meeting. Details on all three issues can be found in the briefing book.

IV. Projects

A. Grant Applications Submitted since October

A list of grant applications was included in the briefing book for reference. There was no discussion of this topic during the committee meeting or report.

Collection Development Committee

Council: C. Matthew Snipp (Chair), Lori M. Weber, Christopher Zorn, Michael F. Goodchild, Kathleen Mullan Harris
Visitor: Kevin Schürer
Staff: George Alter, Robbin Gonzalez, Peter Granda, Amy Pienta

I. Strategic Plan

Staff updated the Committee on the LEADS database and informed them that funding has been identified to hire an information technology student this summer who will systemically mine the database for ideas for new and themed archives. Council suggested surveying the Summer Program staff, participants, and instructors for ideas as well.

Action Item: Council requested a report at the October Council meeting about the results of mining the LEADS database and surveying the Summer Program for ideas for new archives.

The Collection Development Policy was discussed. It has been in effect for three years, during which George Alter joined ICPSR and the Strategic Plan was created and approved. Council agreed it is time to review the policy.

Action Item: Council requested a review of the Collection Development Policy at the October Council meeting.

II. Services for Confidential Data

A. User Fees for Restricted-use Data

The committee discussed ways to handle the costs of managing restricted-use data licenses. Staff reviewed a report on the General Archive's current restricted-use contracts and informed the committee of ICPSR's investigation into creating a Virtual Data Enclave. Council shared their experience with Virtual Data Enclaves and there was consensus that it is a good direction to move in. Council members expressed a strong preference against levying fees on restricted data users given the current usage statistics. Council are open to monitoring the burden placed on ICPSR to manage these licenses and will re-evaluate, as needed, the idea of charging for access to restricted data.

Action Item: Council requested updated restricted-use contract statistics at the October Council meeting and results of the Task Force investigation into creating a Virtual Data Enclave.

B. Enclave Services

Staff introduced proposed new wording for the data enclave application review process, replacing language that says ICPSR will substantively review the application with language indicating that ICPSR will only review applications for disclosure risk. Council members approved the change.

Membership and Marketing Committee

Council: Michael F. Goodchild (Chair) and Jeffrey Moon
Guest: John Garcia
Staff: Linda Detterman and Myron Gutmann

I. Strategic Plan Progress

Staff updated Council on the progress of the Strategic Plan for Membership and Marketing. Staff has been investigating how to solidify and further our leadership position in quality data dissemination to sustain membership and to develop a process to identify low use/high resource activities that should be retired because they have little impact on membership or ICPSR's leadership position.

ICPSR has constituted a small team that will begin monitoring competitive forces. The goal is to capture information that will spur innovative ideas. The team will lay the foundation for the gathering and analysis of competitive information and will later decide if an expanded approach is warranted. The team has divided the monitoring into three primary areas:

- Data Watch (identifying missing/aging data that are popular among our users but not available at ICPSR)
- Competitor Watch (identifying niche players in the data archive space)

- Technology Watch (identifying useful technologies that ICPSR might adapt to better serve its users)

II. Membership and Utilization Activity

Due to the economic situation, there have been concerns over the possibility of a drop in membership, but that has not been the case. ICPSR has seen a small increase in membership, and utilization activity has been the same as previous fiscal years. Staff believe that there is an increase in online analysis activity that is not reflected in the utilization trends report and will present a new utilization report incorporating online analysis activity at the October meeting.

III. OR Meeting 2009

Staff reported that the meeting program is now set and ICPSR is currently collecting abstracts. Over the next three weeks, the Web site for the OR meeting will be launched for internal review. ICPSR will also provide information on the OR meeting on Twitter and Facebook accounts to keep the ORs updated. ICPSR will have an evaluation center during the virtual meeting so that staff can begin preparing for the 2011 conference. Gutmann mentioned that ICPSR's 50th anniversary is in 2012 and staff will need to begin thinking about the events for the anniversary soon.

Goodchild asked about the difference between the technologies being used for the virtual Council meeting and for the OR meeting. Detterman explained that GoToWebinar is more cost-effective than Adobe Connect due to the larger number of participants. Gutmann's Business Meeting report will be prerecorded. The 2011 OR conference will most likely use both forums (virtual and in-person). Goodchild also suggested that information on the number of attendees be kept current on the OR Web site. Staff is planning on pursuing something like that by incorporating Google Analytics statistics into the OR Meeting site page.

IV. Pricing Restructure for FY 2012 and Beyond

Given the current economic situation, a question was raised regarding whether ICPSR should hold dues constant in 2012 and possibly longer. This would be a show of good faith to ICPSR members. ICPSR would communicate to the membership that we are holding dues constant in acknowledgment of the financial constraints faced by member institutions.

The committee recommended that ICPSR set the rates only for 2012 at this time and not freeze rates for a longer period (2013 or beyond). Council will need to assess the state of economy at the March 2010 meeting and to address 2013 rates (and possibly beyond) at that time.

The committee would like a full committee comment on this before bringing it to the Council meeting on June 12, 2009. Detterman was asked to contact the committee members who were absent to solicit their comments by Wednesday, June 10, 2009.

Preservation and Access Committee

Council: Kathleen Mullan Harris (Chair), Francine Berman, C. Matthew Snipp, Ann Wolpert
Visitor: Kevin Schürer
Staff: Bryan Beecher, Nancy McGovern, Asmat Noori, Matthew Richardson, Mary Vardigan

I. Strategic Plan

Staff reported on two items of interest: (1) participation in a conference to discuss how the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) and Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard (METS) metadata standards might work together; and (2) a pending contract with the Library of Congress to lead digital preservation training for the National Digital Information and Infrastructure Preservation Program (NDIIPP).

II. Update on Web Site

Staff previewed the new ICPSR Web site, which will launch in August 2009. Core features were demonstrated, including study search, citation search, variable search, study home pages, study download, and the integration of the thesaurus. Staff also explained how ICPSR was leveraging standard blogging technology for routine content creation tasks such as making announcements and developing FAQs. It was noted that enabling users to comment on Web pages is becoming a common feature of Web sites and that this may be a way to create an active community for ICPSR, especially among ORs.

Council expressed great satisfaction with the new Web site and congratulated staff. Schürer noted that thesaurus functions often generate little use, but also expressed optimism that ICPSR's approach to the thesaurus on the new site might facilitate greater usage. At the request of Council, staff estimated that the effort to launch a refreshed site was approximately 3.0-4.0 FTE at 50% effort for 6-12 months.

Council asked if ICPSR might need special software or systems to support new types of data, such as health data, and staff replied that they had not explored this issue yet. Council and staff both noted that interdisciplinary uses of data generate many new challenges and opportunities. It was pointed out that if agreement is reached on a uniform medical record, there will be a big increase in biomedical data use and analysis. Schürer noted that data archives may increasingly find themselves in a consulting role with respect to good data management practices even if the archive will not ultimately receive the data.

III. ICPSR Data Replica Offshore

Council and staff worked to clarify this action item. Staff had been working on an agreement with the UKDA to house a copy of ICPSR's access content (i.e., content that is stored on the ICPSR Web server for delivery to clients); the UKDA had thought the request was to house a copy of access content plus a standby Web server to deliver the content. Staff made it clear that the desire was only for the former.

Action Item: Beecher and Schürer will create a draft agreement for “cold storage” of the ICPSR access content at the UKDA. Beecher will either execute this agreement with Schürer, or execute a plan to store a copy of the access content in a storage provider located offshore, such as Amazon’s Simple Storage Service (EU locale). Action will be taken by the October 2009 meeting.

Training and Instruction Committee

Council: Michael R. Haines (Chair), Aletha C. Huston, Lori M. Weber, Christopher Zorn
Staff: Dieter Burrell, Myron Gutmann, Lynette Hoelter, William Jacoby

I. Summer Program Enrollment

The committee examined the current enrollment figures for the 2009 Summer Program. Staff explained that it is difficult to give precise figures at this time due to various factors (e.g., applicants to competitive courses in excess of those actually accepted; enrollments beyond size caps in statistical workshops; scholarship applicants, etc.). However, taking uncertainties into account, enrollment seems to be running slightly higher than in 2008. Enrollment in three- to five-day statistical workshops seems to be down somewhat. The Committee discussed the possible impact of the economy on Summer Program enrollment.

II. Update to 2009 Summer Program Schedule

The Committee examined changes to the Summer Program course schedule that have been made since the March 2009 Council meeting. Several short statistical workshops have been rescheduled or cancelled due to low enrollments. The Committee discussed the various considerations involved in, and possible decision rules for, determining whether workshops should be held or cancelled.

Action Item: Council requested that staff prepare a report for the October Council meeting laying out information on short course enrollments and costs.

III. Hubert M. Blalock Lecture Series for 2009

The Committee examined course offerings in the preliminary schedule for the Hubert M. Blalock Lecture Series on Advanced Topics of Social Research.

IV. Scholarships Supporting 2009 Summer Program Participants

The committee examined the various scholarships awarded to participants in the 2009 Summer Program. Council noted that recipients came from a narrow range of academic disciplines. Staff explained that most of the scholarships were created several years ago, and that the detailed considerations behind each one are not well-known by current staff (who were not involved in creating the scholarships).

Action Item: Council requested that staff prepare a report for the October Council meeting on the history of the scholarships, along with ideas to expand the pool of potential scholarship recipients into new academic disciplines, and to use the scholarships as tools to move forward on elements of the ICPSR Strategic Plan.